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## ARTISTIC EMPLOYMENT OF GILDING.



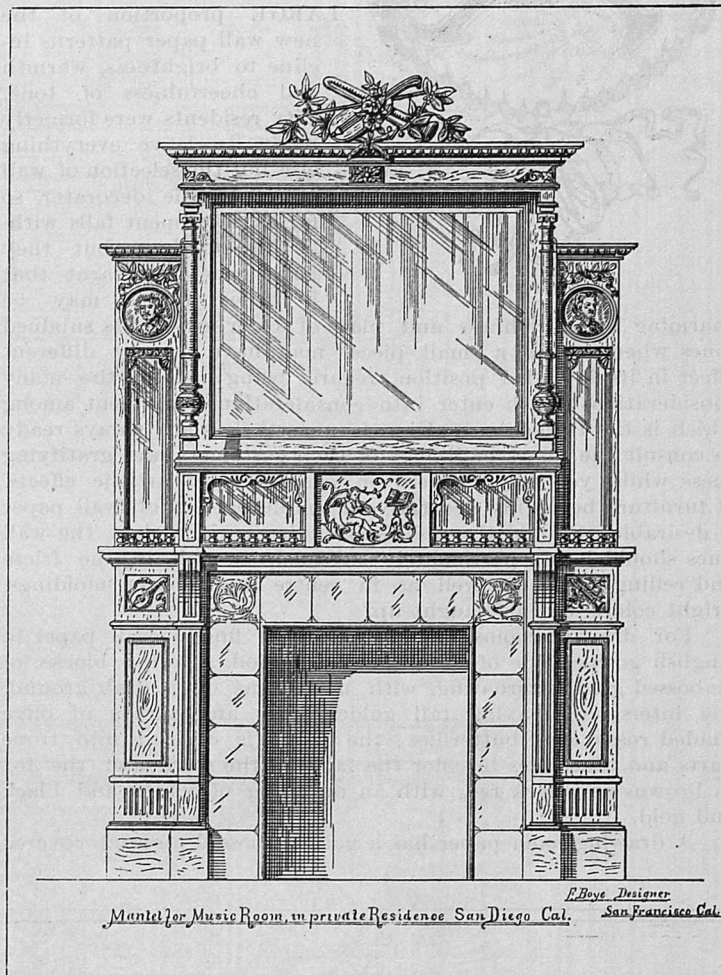
COUNTLESS instances of gilding being improperly or unartistically employed occur in interior decoration. Beautiful in itself and an efficient element of beauty, it may certainly be employed with wonderful effect, as in imparting lightness or heaviness, brightness or shadow, harmonising a system of coloring that would be crude without it and producing a marvellous richness, but exactly in that proportion

it may be used to destroy beauty and to draw attention to ugliness. The way in which gilding is constantly used displays an extraordinary ignorance of its artistic properties. As all are aware, it makes the objects it covers more conspicuous.

In well executed carving, for instance, which require some of their parts to be strongly emphasized and made to stand out against each other, some of the parts, if gilded, will produce the desired contrast. As a rule, it will be found best to gild salient projections intended to catch the light. In almost all cases the use of gold should be reserved for the accentuation of form, a course, however, liable to many exceptions. But gold is often used in excess, and its special advantages are lost. Let us look around the room and see. In addition to frames of mirrors and paintings, which are often properly enriched with entire surfaces in dead and burnished gold, the gold in the one instance subduing the white light of the glass, in the other softening the color tints, we find cornices that look as if they had been dipped in gold, the pattern of the wall paper drawn out with it and the moldings of the doors covered with it, to which are added gilt lustres and sconces, ceiling bands, corners and centres in relief. As Artemus Ward remarked when the many wives of a deceased Mormon elder offered themselves to him in marriage, "It is too much."

The carvings and moldings, let us suppose, are of good design and carefully wrought. Now the beauty of good plain molding

consists in the contrast of light and shade that exists between its members and of the relative proportions of those members. On moldings of this kind gilding may be employed with great effect, not by covering over the whole, but so carefully choosing those members that the contrast of light and shade between them shall be increased, and their proportions maintained and improved. The same rules will apply to all moldings and carvings



that require to be gilt. In houses, however, where moldings are neither well designed nor carefully executed, poor in form and lumpy and coarse in workmanship, gilding merely serves to attract attention to what should be carefully left as subdued as possible.



STAIN graining in imitation of more costly woods than those to which it is applied, or of heightening and improving natural graining, or simulating veining of marbles, has reached a high point of excellence at the hands of skilled house painters. Some manufacturers, too, have been of late particularly successful in their preparations for simulating choice ornamental woods. For bringing out the natural grain of these as employed in cabinet work, French polishing is necessary. This is performed with a spirit varnish containing lac, applied by rubbers with linseed oil. In other cases graining may be performed on the naked wood with transparent colors in turpentine or water, which when dry may be varnished or French polished, or the same may be done on the ordinary woods, previously stained of the colors of the more valuable sorts. A beautiful variety of graining may be executed with strong acids on plain wood brought out by heat, in which way the nitrous acids or aqua fortis applied afford amber and yellow shades, and the sulphuric acid yields shades of a dusky and darker hue. The work is afterwards cleaned off and varnished or polished.

The business office of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER in New York is extremely picturesque, practical and suggestive, to those who love beauty of form and color, novel design and exquisite workmanship. The office is one large room, with broad windows which admit a flood of sunshine and plenty of fresh air. Entering from the hall, you see a group of light effect, and soft, rich color, which fairly pervades the atmosphere. The room is divided into several nooks, called private offices, the partitions being made of fancy Japanese lattice work, set in frames of bamboo; the open lattice, made in squares, shows a variety of design and the tiny bits of wood, most of which are less than an inch in length, are put together with wonderful exactness; the delicacy of the structure strikes one as not exactly suited to every-day use, but strength is secured by perfect construction, and the delicate outlines gain added beauty from the background of color secured by the addition of soft, bright silken draperies put up very simply on tiny rods. These cosy offices are filled with soft, bright rugs, easy chairs, couches and artistic trifles, which add to the cosy effect and serve many times for practical business purposes.—*American Art.*